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Poole, John

The Hole in the Wall

A farce

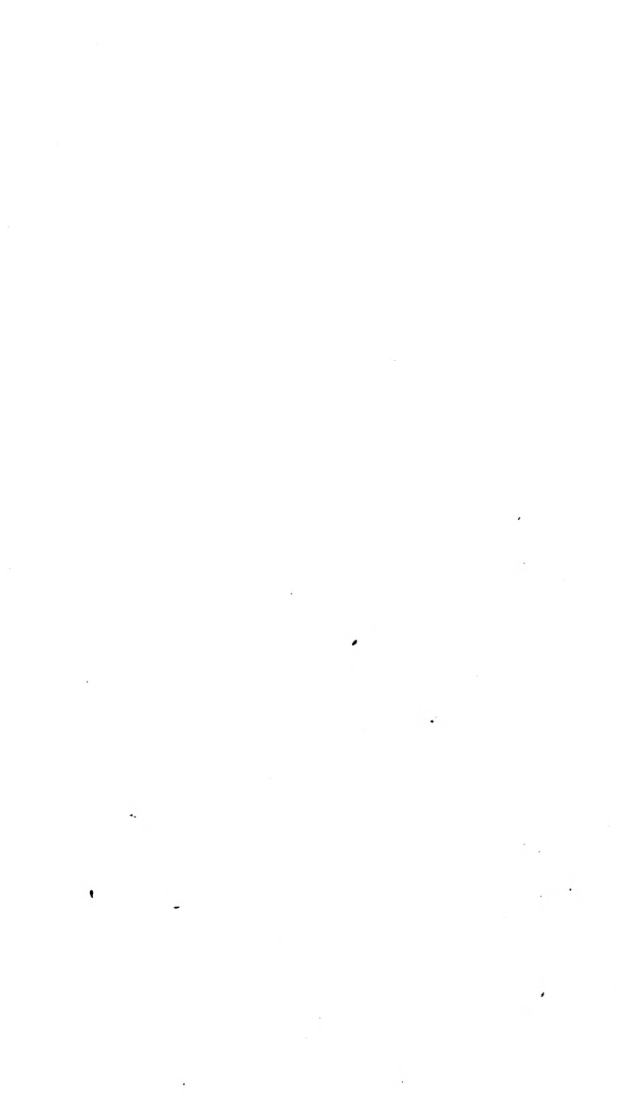
In two acts.



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1910



THE HOLE IN THE WALL:

A FARCE,

IN TWO ACTS.



BY JOHN POOLE, ESQ:

AUTHOR OF HAMLET TRAVESTIE.



[*from the first London edition, of 1813.*]



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PREFACE.

In all ages, and in every civilized state, the **DRAMA**, with regard to its influence over the happiness and the morals of society, has been considered as an object so worthy of attention, that the greatest statesmen, the most profound philosophers, nay, even the most rigid divines, have occasionally applied their talents to——

—Pshaw ! that won't do ; to be serious about a farce ! tis absolutely impossible.——

—Yet one must write something to *look* like a preface, well, then :——

No one ever sat down to write a farce with a thought in his head about a discriminating and just posterity ; about fame and her trumpet : or about a monument, or **MR. FLAXMAN**, or Westminster-abbey. To glide down to immortality upon the stream of reputation, and catch its breezes with a steady sail, requires a weightier ballast than a few farces ; the most your poor devil of a farce-writer hopes, is, to be allowed to paddle about a little time on its bosom, keeping clear of its muddy banks, yet never losing sight of shore. Now let me tell you, **MR. JENKINS**, that tis no easy matter to do even that.

To drop the metaphor, else, to be candid, twill drop me ; considering, therefore, the little reputation that is to be gained even by the most successful farce, isn't it hard that any one should endeavor to abridge it ?——

——Thank'e, **MR. JENKINS** ; you are complimentary. But then the plot—how they abuse my plot ! one critic says tis like the plots of the last thousand and fifteen farces——all about love and courtship, and that it ends in marriage. Now, I say that, old or new, this is the

best subject in the world for a farce : besides, a *farce* ought to end in marriage ;—for *beyond* it there's no joke, by Jupiter !

I believe it has escaped general observation that, in the greater number of *farces*, the principal personages are *lovers* : *husbands* and *wives* are reserved to “ point “ the morals” of *SERIOUS comedies*, or *TRAGEDIES* ! now that's very odd ! but I think I can account for the distinction ; for, in my opinion, but as it may chance to spoil my fortune with you, miss***——I'll keep my opinion to myself.

Another critic says, that my plot is like the plot of the *Pannel*.—

—From Hyde-park corner to my friend MATHEW'S cottage on the king's road, is a distance of about three miles.——

—Very true, mr. JENKINS, this may not look like an illustration yet, but I'll make a very good one of it before I've done with it.

The toll-taker at Hyde-park-corner will tell you, that you are not obliged to go along the king's road,—you may go to it through Brompton. Now, mr. JENKINS, we'll mount our horses,—start from Hyde-park-corner, I'll take the king's road, you go through Brompton, in half an hour we shall meet at our friend's cottage ; there we are. Now, sir, though the object of our journey has been the same ; though we set out from the same point, and both travelled on horseback, yet you will not affirm that we both passed over the *same intermediate ground*.

No ; I came through Brompton, you along the king's road.

Then I have established my position : for though the *Pannel* and the *Hole in the Wall* both begin with the discovery of a moveable wainscot, and end with a marriage ; yet as the *intermediate* business of the one, differs totally from that of the other, they being as dissimilar as Brompton and the king's road, and the moveable pannel being used as a means of concealment in the first-named piece, and as a means of communicating in the second, it cannot be said that the plots of the two pieces are alike.

But, after all, though I contend that the plot of the *Hole in the Wall* is unlike the plot of the *Pannel*, yet I do not mean to assert that it can boast of much novelty ; much less would I presume to suppose that the piece altogether possesses a degree of merit proportioned to the success it has met with ; for I am convinced that a worse piece——

If a worse could be found.

I'll adopt your amendment, mr. JENKINS—I am convinced that a worse picce, *if a worse could be found*, supported, as this has been, by so much professional talent, could hardly have failed.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY-LANE.	NEW-YORK.
Old Stubborn,	<i>Mr. Lovegrove</i>	<i>Mr. Yates</i>
Capt. Courtney,	— <i>J. Wallack</i>	— <i>Carpender</i>
Martin,	— <i>Knight</i>	— <i>Hilson</i>
Jeremy,	— <i>Oxberry</i>	— <i>Pritchard</i>
Snapall,	— <i>Maddocks</i>	— <i>Jones</i>
Mrs. Latchet,	<i>Mrs. Sparks</i>	<i>Mrs. Hogg</i>
Emily,	— <i>Orger</i>	— <i>Darley</i>
Fanny,	<i>Miss Kelly</i>	— <i>Oldmixon</i>

THE HOLE IN THE WALL.

A C T I.

SCENE—two adjoining houses—the house on the right, *mrs. Latchet's*—that on the left, *old Stubborn's*.

enter, from old Stubborn's, MARTIN.

Bless my soul ! I've been in this cursed village three days, and if I remain in it three days longer I shall certainly die of the vapors. My master, *mr. Stubborn*, is at perfect liberty to indulge himself in his odd whims, but he must not expect me to submit to them. A pretty freak indeed ! to leave London in June, when no person of the least fashion or consideration even thinks of the country till November ! had it pleased nature to have made me a cabbage or a cauliflower, I might, perhaps, have vegetated in this insipid place with tolerable composure. Eh ! here comes Fanny. Except eating, the society of that girl is the only rational enjoyment I have.

enter, from mrs. Latchet's, FANNY.

Fan. Well, Martin, here I am.

Mar. Yes, I see you are. But, pray, what have you been doing at *mrs. Latchet's*, after our master's positive injunction, that not one of our family should have the least intercourse with her ?

Fan. That must remain a secret, till I know whether you are rogue enough to be trusted. Would you put fifty pounds into your pocket ?

Mar. Ay ; or a hundred, upon compulsion.

Fan. Then be wise and they are yours.

Mar. Then fortune and merit, after having been at variance for centuries, are, at last, going to shake hands. But I say, Fanny, are the means of obtaining them honorable ?

Fan. Purely : you must assist me to cheat our master.

Mar. It wou'dn't be fair to take a bribe for that.

Fan. Why not ?

Mar. Because we servants are in the habit of cheating our masters every day—gratis.

Fan. You are too scrupulous. But, to balance the account of conscience, by cheating our master, we shall serve our mistress.

Mar. That will leave the account too much in their favor. However, as I dare say we shall be able to make up for our superabundant honesty some other way, I'm yours to command.

Fan. You must know, then, that when the father of our young mistress, miss Emily, died, he left her, then an infant, under the guardianship of our old master, mr. Stubborn ; and her twin sister Flirtilla to the care of mrs. Latchet : but trusting the ultimate disposal, both of them and their fortunes, to the discretion of mr. Stubborn.

Mar. Undutiful father !

Fan. Mr. Stubborn having frequent occasion to visit mrs. Latchet, on the subject of their respective charges, he one day lost his old heart, and gave her a written promise of marriage. But on comparing the charms of mrs. Latchet, at fifty-eight, with those of his ward, miss Emily, at eighteen——

Mar. The inference pops out by instinct.

Fan. Well, then : to avoid the importunities of the old woman, and prevent captain Courtney's interviews with miss Emily, our master determined upon secretly leaving London for this place ; but the widow, discovering his intentions, immediately set off in pursuit ; and that house adjoining ours being unoccupied, she engaged it. Now we want you to assist us in frustrating our master's scheme of marrying his ward, and in obtaining his consent to her marriage with captain Courtney.

Mar. Nothing more easy : any of the fashionable novels, of the last twenty years, will furnish us with a scheme how a daughter may cheat her parents or a ward her guardian.

Fan. For shame ! dont let us disgrace ourselves by stealing precedents ; let our roguery be original. Besides, I have told you but one half of our design : we must not only prevent old Stubborn's marrying our young mistress, but must procure his marriage with mrs. Latchet. You know the reward—can you assist us ?

Mar. Stare me full in the face, and you will see the lines of address and industry standing bump out on my forehead. Our master is as stingy as a lord ; my service with him is not likely to afford either honor or profit : so I'll serve the opposite party to the last—scheme in my brains. But where is that nonpariel, the captain ?

Fan. At mrs. Latchet's ; and our master's absence affording me the opportunity, I have just been holding a council with them, upon the present perilous state of our affairs, and the measures best to be adopted for their amelioration. There's a parliamentary touch for you.

Mar. Mrs. Latchet's business is settled : she has the old man's promise of marriage, and must compel him to ratify it by law.

Fan. She'll never do that. She knows that the charms of that woman are but poorly estimated by the world, who, flying from Cupid to the lord chancellor, seeks to obtain by law what love could not accomplish. Now run and bring miss Emily here ; I have promised the lovers an interview : after that we'll to council again ; and, if fortune favor merit——

Mar. Fortune, like most great people in office, is apt to let merit shift for itself ; but impudence, Fanny, impudence is the never-failing passport to her presence, and on that we must rely. [exit into Stubborn's

Fan. Here comes my hero.

Enter cautiously, from mrs. Latchet's, capt. COURTNEY.

Capt. C. Well, my dear Fanny ; any agreeable piece of intelligence for me ?

Fan. Two in a breath, captain : the all-accomplished and all-accomplishing Martin is on our side ; and miss Emily will bless you with her presence in an instant.

Capt. C. I can never sufficiently reward you.

enter EMILY, from Stubborn's.

My beloved Emily after an age of absence—

Emily. One moment is all I can grant you ; my guardian is expected to return every instant, and—

Capt. C. Cruel Emily ! suffer me but to declare—

Fan. Dont, madam ; this is no time for declarations, or protestations, or any other sort of *ations*. We must instantly devise some plan to obtain your guardian's consent to your marriage.

Capt. C. My part is decided : let us fly and—

Emily. Imprudent ! consider that by marrying without the consent of my guardian I risk the loss of my fortune.

Capt. C. Blest with you, my Emily, what greater possession can I desire ?

Fan. Pshaw ! nonsense ! that may be all very fine ; but I am determined that my mistress shall not wantonly relinquish her fortune ; at least, we will endeavor to accomplish your wishes.—Be prudent, captain, or I fly your colors.

enter MARTIN.

Mar. Huzza !—huzza ! the day is ours !

Emily. What has happened ?

Mar. Such a discovery ! talk of Columbus !—

Capt. C. Martin, I'm all impatience !

Mar. Talk of the source of the Nile !

Capt. C. Martin, I say—

Mar. Talk of the longitude !

Fan. Why, Martin, Martin—

Mar. Talk of the philosopher's stone !

Capt. C. My dear Martin, tell me instantly,—take this,—(*gives money*)

Mar. I am one of the true discoverer-breed. (*looking at the money*) I'll now publish for the benefit of society :—as I was moving the large press in your apartment, (*to Emily*) I discovered a moveable pannel—a hole in the wall,—which opens directly into mrs. Latchet's.—There's a discovery !

Capt. C. Well ; what then ?

Mar. What then ! I wish you good day, sir. (*going*)

Capt. C. I dont understand you.

Mar. Now dont you perceive with what facility you may now contrive your interviews with your dear Emily, and carry on your consultations with her, and her aunt, and Fanny, and—o ! you're a pretty fellow for a lover !

Capt. C. My dear Martin, I'm overjoyed. Your zeal shall not go unrewarded : be but faithful to us, and help us to cheat your master—and the fifty pounds shall be a hundred.

Mar. Where is the servant that wouldn't cheat a hundred masters for one pound ? but a hundred pounds for cheating one master ! sir, your generosity binds me to you for ever.

Fan. Come, come ; we must not stand chattering here : let us go and acquaint mrs. Latchet with our discovery. You, Martin, remain here, and give us notice of the enemy's approach, that we may return undiscovered.

[exunt all but Martin, into mrs. Latchet's]

Mar. Now, Martin, my boy—courage, and a little brains, and your fortune is made.—The captain's hundred pounds, clearly prove that my master is behaving very ill in this business, and therefore there can be no harm in cheating him.—That's well reasoned.—There's nothing like the logic of Threadneedle-street ; tis proposition, argument, and conviction, in a breath.—But I have undertaken a difficult task ; for, though my master has no more sense than an oyster, he fancies himself a very Socrates.—However, tis a strong point gained, when one knows the weak side of one's adversary.—Egad, here he is ; I must give notice of his arrival.—
(going)

enter STUBBORN.

Stub. Very well, mrs. Latchet, very well ; you may play me these pranks if you please, but you will gain nothing by it : you will find I am not to be moved ; for, though I am by no means obstinate, yet, when I have once formed a resolution, the more I am opposed, the more positive I become.

Mar. What the devil is he grumbling about ?

Stub. I left London in the hope of getting rid of my plagues, and here they come bump upon my heels.—But it won't do: they shall find that I harpoon myself into my resolutions, and that trying to disengage me from them, only makes me stick the faster.

Mar. I must be off.—(*going*)

Stub. What, Martin, are you there?

Mar. No, sir, (*going*) but I shall be instantly.

Stub. Come hither, Martin, I want you.

Mar. Your commands, sir.

Stub. Martin, you are a good servant—a faithful servant.

Mar. Oh, sir! (*aside*) how confoundedly ironical the old fellow is.

Stub. Martin, I like you, for you are always of my opinion.

Mar. Thereby I am always sure of being right.—(*going*)

Stub. As a reward for your good conduct, I intend to bestow upon you——

Mar. Thank'e, sir; how much?

Stub. How much? pshaw! you are not one of those mercenary servants who think of nothing but getting money. I have a nobler gift for you; my confidence, you rogue, my entire confidence.

Mar. Sir, your confidence is as good as money to me.—(*aside*) If it be of the right sort, it will fetch me a hundred pounds.

Stub. Then attend. The arrival of a certain person in this village, has very much alarmed me.

Mar. Ah! sir—that gunpowder mrs. Latchet.

Stub. Martin, a word in your ears—she be damned; but she has brought that gunpowder captain with her.

Mar. That's terrible, indeed, sir.

Stub. Pooh! pooh! not at all; I think I like it, Martin; I'll show them what metal I'm made of.—Now, though I've something to say to the old woman, I'll not see her myself—for, after playing the faithless swain, it would be cruel to wound her tender old heart by the sight of me.

Mar. Very true, sir.

Stub. So I'll send you with a message to her.

Mar. (*aside*)—That's lucky.

Stub. "I that am cruel, am yet merciful," as what's-his-name says in the play; so tell her, as tenderly as possible, that she and her captain may both be da——

Mar. Stop one moment, sir; you forget the captain's a fighter.

Stub. True, Martin; then tell her that Emily would have been my wife at this moment, did I not wait the arrival of my brother, who wishes to be present at our marriage.

Mar. Delightfully edifying! you defer your own happiness to gratify the wishes of a brother.

Stub. Ah! he's my elder brother; and as he has no children to contribute towards his happiness, you know I must—

Mar. Very true, sir.

Stub. Come in for every shilling he's worth.

Mar. Ah! sir; nothing so effectually brings out the charities of life as the prospect of a good legacy.

Stub. But legacy-hunting does not always succeed. There was mrs. Snuffle, an old widow of ninety-six, with a fortune of fifty thousand pounds: in hopes of a good slice of it, I used to trot five miles, night after night, through all weathers, to play at cribbage with the old devil; and when she died, what do you think she left me?

Mar. Why, ten—twenty thousand pounds, perhaps?

Stub. She left me the cribbage board; dam'me if she did not cut me off with the cribbage board; and I was laughed at by all the town into the bargain. Let's see what Jeremy wants.

enter JEREMY.

Jer. Oh, your honor! your honor! if your honor knowed what I know, with submission, you'd die with rage.

Stub. Speak; you alarm me.

Mar. And me, by the lord!

B

Jer. As I was at work in your honor's garden, humming a tune ; I forget what I was humming.

Stub. If you are humming me, rascal——

Jer. With submission, sir, dont be in a passion just yet.

Stub. Will you get to the end of your story, rascal ?

Jer. I have not got to the beginning yet—but if you are not in a passion presently, with submission, you dont deserve as how any body should take the trouble to put you in a passion again as long as you lives.

Mar. I'm in an agony.

Stub. Tell me in a word, or, by the lord, I'll ——

Jer. Well, then ; but if your honor likes to hear a story without the graces, with submission, I pities your taste.

Stub. Fetch me the blunderbass, Martin ; I'll blow the rascal's brains out.

Jer. If you do, your honor, you'll drive every thing out of my head at once ; but you shall have your honor's own way. As I was at work in your honor's garden, I looked up at mrs. Latchet's window, and there I saw mrs. Latchet, and captain Courtney, and miss Emily, all hugging each other for dear life.

Mar. The black head has ruined us !

Stub. Confusion !

Jer. Master, I dont bear malice, especially as you're my master ; and though you've spoiled as good a story as ever was made to tell, I'll advise you in this affair ; let the young people amuse themselves by all means.

Stub. How dare you talk of advising me, you scoundrel ! come, Martin ; we'll go and take them by surprise.

Mar. Hold, sir. You know I never presume to advise you ; but I can tell what you mean to do.

Stub. Well, let's hear.

Mar. You mean to send Jeremy to keep watch outside the door of miss Emily's apartment ; me to surprise her at mrs. Latchet's ; while you remain here with your eyes fixed, like a Cerberus, upon that front door, so that she may not escape us any way.

Stub. Exactly what I meant to do ! tis an excellent scheme, isn't it ?

Mar. Wonderfully ingenious ! you have a most surprising invention—(*aside*) when I take the trouble of thinking for you.

Stub. Now for it : fly, Martin—fly, Jeremy.

Jer. Going to fly, directly, your honor.

Mar. (*aside*) Now, then, for our first use of the hole in the wall.

[*exunt Jeremy at Stubborn's—Martin at mrs. Latchet's*

Stub. (*looking steadfastly at the doors*)—Now what will the traitress say for herself ? o lord ! o lord ! she's with my rival : I am choking with rage, love, jealousy, madness ! I'm dying, I'm dead ; eh ! what do I see ? I revive. Here she comes, and out of my own house ! Jeremy, then, has been deceived.

enter, from Stubborn's, JEREMY, followed by EMILY and FANNY.

Jer. If miss Emily isn't a witch, I'm no conjuror, that's all.

Emily. How is this, sir ? is it by your orders . . . ? Jeremy has been watching at my chamber-door ?

Stub. O pardon, my dear Emily, the fault of doubting love.

Fanny. O, madam ! this treatment cries aloud for vengeance. They have interrupted us at that interesting point of a romance, where two faithful lovers, after exchanging mutual vows of constancy, in spite of the opposition of a crusty old guardian, and planning how they might escape his tyranny.

Stub. You have been reading a damned bad book, you little rascal.

Fanny. And to be disturbed by that ugly Jeremy.

Jer. Ugly Jeremy !—now that's false ; if it were true I'd file a criminal information against you, and punish you for a libel.

Stub. Once more, pardon, my little angel ;—one word from that pretty mouth, and I shall die of jeal.

Fanny. Speak, miss ; perhaps he'll keep his word.

Emily. Then, once for all, sir, hear my determination : I will no longer either listen to your addresses, or submit to your tyranny, and from this moment, I will use every effort to free myself from both.

[*exit*

Fanny. I hope you are satisfied, sir ; and, as for you, mr. Jeremy, take that—(*slaps his face*) [*exit Fanny*

Jer. O lord ! this is the reward of honesty.

Stub. That will teach you to see clearer another time, blockhead.

Jer. I'm positive I saw them together.—Art has done much for me, to be sure ; but, then, nature has been very bountiful ; and for an eye-sight, or an appetite, I'll back myself against any man in England.

Stub. Well ; I'm not afraid of her : she can't marry without my consent ;—and, as for her arts, even that little firebrand, Fanny, to back them—egad, I've a head ; haven't I, Jeremy ?

Jer. A head,—who the devil doubts it ? tis as plain as the nose on your face.

[*exeunt*

SCENE II—*a room at old Stubborn's.*

enter MARTIN cautiously, and taps at the opposite door.

Mar. Fanny, Fanny !

enter FANNY.

Fanny. Well, Martin ; we have succeeded to admiration.

Mar. And now I've a scheme in my head ; but tis not in a state for exhibition yet ;—tis a scheme in the rough : the statue lies in the block, (*touching his head*) and we have only to chip away the knobs and corners.

Fanny. Then chip away as fast as possible.

Mar. Is the resemblance you told me of which Emily bears to her sister, Flirtilla, now in London, very striking ?

Fanny. So striking, that it would be difficult to distinguish one from the other, were it not for the remarkable dissimilarity of their manners : for while Emily's is all ease and simplicity, Flirtilla is all vanity and affectation.

Mar. Excellent ! but are their voices alike ?

Fanny. In tone, precisely ; but Flirtilla, having lived a great deal in the fashionable world, has acquired that low-life, high-life, mode of speaking ; (*mimicking*) that drowsy, drawling, drivelling yaw-yaw, manner, with mouth half open, and eyes half closed, which stamps the person of fashion, and which seems to have been invented by a club of fools, who, as the only way of concealing their folly, were compelled to render their conversation unintelligible. That's it—'pon my honor.

Mar. Then Emily shall personate her ;—but fly ;—here comes old Stubborn ; I'll explain all presently.

Fanny. I'll go and prepare Emily for the part.
[*exit Fanny*]

Mar. And now, my old boy, we'll show you some play.

enter STUBBORN.

Well, sir, no wonder poor Jeremy was deceived. Mrs. Latchet has brought her niece Flirtilla with her from London,—it was she whom Jeremy saw at the window. Egad, she is so like her sister Emily, that, had it not been for the difference of her dress and manners, I could have sworn Emily had been before me.

Stub. Flirtilla with her ! why then its all as clear as the sun ; I knew all along Jeremy had made a blunder ; I was sure Emily wouldn't play me such a trick : there's the effect of education, Martin ; Emily, who has been brought up under my care, is a nice, steady, pretty, bewitching, o bless her ! but Flirtilla, who has passed all her life with mrs. Latchet, is a vain, affected, fanciful, o ! curse her !

Mar. Ah ! poor mrs. Latchet ! we had a long talk about you, sir.

Stub. And what did the old animal say ?

Mar. She means to break your heart : she has cut you,

sir ; she says that she followed you here, not for the mere pleasure of beholding your beautiful face, but to gain consent to the union of her niece Flirtilla and captain Courtney, who has suddenly fallen in love with her : and as for you and Emily, she has done with you both for ever.

Stub. Why didn't you tell me this before, my dear Martin ? I shall go wild with joy, I shall, o ! then, Emily will marry me to revenge herself upon her faithless captain.

Mar. Yes, she'll cut off her nose to be revenged of her face.

Stub. And do you call marrying me, cutting off her nose, and be damned to you ! and the old woman, in despair, of obtaining me, will give me back my written promise. Well, Martin ; I think we may now cry " victory," for fortune seems to have taken up the cudgels for us.

[*exit*

Mar. And if fortune will but trust her cudgels into my hands for a short time, I'll give you a dressing with them to your heart's content.

[*exit*

SCENE III—*a room at Mrs. Latchet's.*

enter Mrs. LATCHET, captain COURTNEY, and MARTIN.

Mrs. Lat. I approve of your scheme in part, Martin : but I don't know what to say about surrendering the written promise.

Mar. It will be the means of throwing him more off his guard, madam ; and I'll undertake that he shall marry you without it.

Capt. C. Whatever you do be expeditious.

Mar. Make yourself easy, sir,—you have nothing to do but disclaim all regard for Emily ; feign a sudden affection for Flirtilla ; sigh, look sad, and swear yourself black ; that's easy enough, you know, sir.

Mrs. Lat. But should, Mr. Stubborn desire to see both sisters at the same time.

Mar. Leave that to me

Mrs. Lai. The deceiver ! but he shall marry me though he dosen't deserve me. Look at me, captain ; many women not possessed of half my charms, and old enough to be my grandmothers, have married *young* husbands : but mr. Stubborn who is as old—I mean as middle-aged—as myself ;—well no matter.

Capt. C. Now, Martin, our hopes rest upon you.

Mrs. Lai. And remember, you have undertaken to reclaim my renegade.

Mar. If I fail may I be stript of my livery, and follow the plough for the remainder of my life. I'll now creep back through the wall, and prepare my master to meet the high lady of fashion, Flirtilla. Miss Emily is to make her appearance when I cough. *[exunt severally]*

SCENE IV—the front of the houses as in the first scene.

enter MARTIN and STUBBORN, from Stubborn's.

Stub. Give me joy, Martin, give me joy. In three days my brother will be here, and on the fourth the captain shall marry Flirtilla, and I'll marry Emily at the same time.

Mar. The devil you will. *(aside)* If you wait four days, I tremble for your success. In that time Emily may effect, what we must, by all means, endeavor to prevent. She may obtain an interview with the captain and reclaim his affections.

Stub. So you think Flirtilla does not like him.

Mar. I'm certain she dosen't : and, a word in your ear,—the young devil is over head and ears in love with you.

Stub. Impossible !

Mar. So one would think, sir. *(looking at him significantly)*

Stub. Not at all ; nothing more likely ; I'm not to be squeezed at neither.

Mar. *(aside)* Apropos ! talking of sneezing reminds me that it's time to cough. *(coughs)*

Stub. See, Martin, here comes that cargo of fashion and folly from London, Flirtilla.

enter EMILY, as FLIRTILLA, dressed in the very extreme of fashion, and assuming a tone of voice and a manner excessively affected.

Emily. Ah ! my dear mr. Stubborn, I am overwhelmed with joy at seeing you.—'Pon my honor you look monstrous well ; I suspect you *rouge* ; rouge, you know, is getting in with the gentlemen.

Stub. Miss Flirtilla, I rejoice—

Emily. *Apropos !* talking of rouge, how is my sister Emily ? doesn't use it I know, trusts to nature, forlorn hope ; nature does pretty well sometimes, but nothing equal to this—real parisian ; nature knows nothing about fashionable complexions ; tints mawkish and insipid, or a vulgarity in her coloring quite disgusting ; her milkmaid-complexions, indeed, are *assez bien*, as you say.

Stub. I say ! I haven't even thought of a milkmaid these twenty years.

Emily. *Apropos !* I think——eh ? what was I going to think ? oh ! ah ! very true, I wish Emily had a little of my spirit and animation.

Stub. I wish the devil had it all !

Emily. Tis every thing to a girl with a tolerable face ; it sets her off to the best advantage ; she strikes, she enchants, she over-powers, she——heigho !

Mar. Mark that, sir.

Stub. Egad ! I believe you're right, Martin.

Emily. Now might I but confess ! one look, one smile, one sigh—Cupid ! hearts ! darts !——

Mar. Ah ! dont let her seduce you, sir.

Stub. Never fear me : I'm an old bird ; she sha'n't put salt upon my tail.

Emily. Oh, sir, pardon my confusion !

Stub. Stand out of the way, she's going to pop the question.

Emily. You must perceive the conflict which agitates my bosom ; resign, my sister Emily, and save, oh ! save, a fond female from distraction. (*kneels*)

Stub. Here's a pretty situation for a young d'amon of sixty ! madam, it grieves me to decline so distinguished an offer, but our tempers, our habits——

Emily. Oh, sir ! you shall find me any thing you desire ; I'll change " from gay to grave, from lively to severe."—When in London, if you object to my having card-parties, I'll be content to give masquerades ; should my balls and concerts be unpleasant to you, I'll suffer you to go to bed at eight o'clock whenever I give them.

Stub. Vastly accommodating !

Emily. Then in the country we'll be amiably pastoral, you a Damon, I a Phillis ; purling streams, rural concerts, nightingales, linnaets, crows, ravens, cuckoos, jack-daws, caw-caws.

Stub. Martin, she's cracked, gone, march hare.

Mur. A little touched I'm afraid, sir.

Stub. Excuse me, madam, but I neither like ladies of ton nor pastoral Phillises.

Emily. Then excuse me, sir, but I have set my heart upon having you, and I will have you.

Stub. Pshaw ! nonsense ! madam, you compel me to declare that I not only, damn circumlocution ! I hate you.—I think she can't misunderstand that.

Emily. Hear this thou outraged god of love ! I, young, amiable, and beautiful, to be rejected by a ——but I'll be revenged ; I'll marry the captain, and his happiness shall be so much my care that you shall die of envy and remorse.

Mrs. LATCHET and captain COURTNEY appear—Emily joins them.

Stub. Ha ! ha ! ha ! so be it. Now, if I don't make her marry him instantly, she may start some new whim and refuse him. Now, Martin, run to the post-office and see if there be any letters for me.

Mur. I fly, sir.

[Exit Martin]

(Mrs. Latchet, captain Courtney, and Emily advance)

Emily. Come, my dear Edward, let us thank Mr. Stubborn for his kind consent.

Capt. C. In giving me the hand of my Flirtilla, sir, you have rendered me happy for life.

Stub. (aside) For life ! then he intends to hang himself before the honeymoon is over.

Mrs. Lat. The wretch doesn't deign to notice me !

Stub. O, the devil ! she's here.—Ecod, I'll take courage ; I must spring the mine some time or other, so the sooner done the better. *Mrs. Latch*—whoo !—I have got the match in my hand, but expect so tremendous an explosion that I'm afraid to fire the train.—*Mrs. Latchet*, madam, to please you I have granted the request of the young people there, and in return I trust you will not refuse mine.

Mrs. Lat. (*aside*) Oh ! then I have wronged him. Sir, I can refuse you nothing ; spare my blushes ! but, if you wish to marry me, oh, sir ! say it at once.

Stub. (*aside*) An amorous old fool ! madam, I have nothing to request but that you will return me the promise I gave you ; I gave it in a moment of youthful indiscretion, and—

Mrs. Lat. Brute ! perfidious wretch ! and am I to be made the sport of your caprices ? but I have done with you ; you need not fear any more of my tender reproaches, you villain ! take back your broken promise ; there, I discard you for ever ! (*throws a paper at him*)

Stub. (*tearing it*) Huzza ! huzza ! now, captain, having broken my own chains, I'll rivet yours. You and Flirtilla shall be married within an hour ; and, on my brother's arrival, you shall witness my marriage with Emily.

enter MARTIN—gives a letter to Stubborn.

Capt. C. Martin, all has succeeded, and we shall be united within an hour.

Mar. Bravo ! I'll announce the glorious intelligence to Fanny. [*exit to Stubborn's*]

Stub. (*having read the letter*) So much the better. Here is a letter from my brother ; listen : (*reads*) “ Important business detains me in London ; so do not wait my arrival, but marry your ward, Emily, immediately.”

Emily. O heavens ! then we are lost !

Stub. So, my dear Flirtilla, I'll go to the attorney in the village, order him to prepare the contracts immedi-

ately, and delay your marriage till the evening, when we'll make a double wedding. [exit

Capt. C. Confusion! we're undone!

Emily. Our project is frustrated.

Mrs. Lat. And my marriage more distant than ever. But I see how it is, that villain Martin has betrayed us.

Capt. C. If I thought that, the scoundrel should pay dearly for it.

enter MARTIN, leading on FANNY with an air of triumph.

Mar. Now, Fanny, for a brilliant reception.

Capt. C. O you rascal!

Emily. The traitor has ruined us.

Mrs. Lat. Let us hang the villain on the door-post.

Capt. C. (draws) Confess, or I'll run you through the body.

Fanny. Why, Martin, is this our brilliant reception?

Mar. Be quiet; can't you take the joke?

Capt. C. You abominable rascal! ruin us and call it a joke! but I'll——

Mar. Hold, sir, pray; one word, are you serious?

Capt. C. Serious! this is no time for jesting; the letter you gave old Stubborn was from his brother; he gives him permission to marry Emily instantly, and the old fellow has determined on a double marriage this evening.

Mar. Then we're nailed up! but do not doubt my probity, sir, for I've done all in my power to cheat my master.

Fanny. For my sake spare him, sir, at least till we have been married a month or two.

Capt. C. No, the rascal shall suffer.

Mar. Mercy, sir, mercy! if you kill me I shall certainly die upon the spot.

Capt. C. Well, for the present you may live.

Mar. And that's no easy matter as times go.

Capt. C. But upon condition that you help us out of this difficulty.

Mar. (aside) Would I were at Constantinople! sir, I have it, tis your only hope, follow my example, run away. [exit into Stubborn's

Capt. C. Confusion ! but he shall not escape thus. (*following*)

Mrs. Lat. Kill him, captain, by all means.

Fanny. (*detaining him*) Sir, sir, would you follow him into mr. Stubborn's house ? should he return and find you there, every thing would inevitably be discovered ; as it is, we may yet hope to deceive him. Now, miss, go to mrs. Latchet's, change your dress, and return instantly, through the pannel, to your own apartment.

Capt C. Now, Fanny, our hopes rest upon you ; endeavor to prevail with Martin to rejoin us ; promise him any thing, every thing.

Fanny. Never fear, sir ; in love, as in politics, when a gentleman is generous, and has a woman in his interest, there is not any thing he may not hope to accomplish. [*exit into Stubborn's—mrs. Latchet, Emily, and capt.*

Courtney, into mrs. Latchet's.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

A C T II.

SCENE—*Stubborn's garden.*

JEREMY *discovered at work.*

Jer. Ay, Jeremy's a blockhead, and Jeremy's a drunkard, and Jeremy can't see clearly ! when I said I see'd them'ere traitors together this morning, they told me as how I was drunk ! now I wasn't drunk, though I confess I might have been what they call a little funny ! well, we shall see who is right by and by. Perhaps, now, I dont see three people together, who, as the vulgar say, are as thick as three in a bed. Here they comes ; but I won't listen ; no, listening is paltry work, and Jeremy's an honorable man. I'll just rest myself behind that 'ere tree ; and, if they should talk so loud that I can't help hearing them, why it will be no fault of mine. (*lies down behind a tree*)

enter EMILY, FANNY, and MARTIN.

Mar. No, madam, I must resign. Acting as prime minister to two young lovers is a dangerous employment.

Funny. But, Martin, for my sake——

Emily. And, consider, Martin, if *you* abandon us.—

Mar. Indeed, madam, I'd rather you'd form your administration without considering me.

Emily. But, Martin; we can't succeed without you.

Mar. Sorry for it; must take care of myself.

Emily. And Martin, wear this ring for my sake.

Mar. O, madam; my duty to you is paramount to every personal consideration. (*aside*) In politics nothing succeeds so well as a little coquetry.

Fanny. Now, have you a scheme ready cut and dried?

Mar. A scheme! a thousand!

Emily. What's to be done?

Mar. That first scheme of mine was too extraordinary a hit, that it is the pivot upon which all our future proceedings must turn.

Fan. Then, miss, return to your chamber, be ready to resume the part of Flirtilla at a moment's notice; and through the means of that disguise, we may yet deceive your guardian.

(*Jeremy comes forward*)

Jer. I have *accidentally* overheard all your plans; but don't be afraid.

Mar. (*confused*) Afraid! oh, no! you're a man of too much honor to——

Jer. Very true; Jeremy is an honorable man. I scorn a paltry underhanded trick, so I gives you all fair notice, as how I shall instantly tell my master all I knows.

[*exit*

(*they look at each other for some time in consternation*)

Fan. Martin.

Mar. Fanny.

Emily. We are lost.

Mar. We are sewed up! but, stay—(*to Emily*) does old Stubborn know your sister's hand writing?

Emily. No.

Mar. Nor yours?

Fan. Never wrote him a billet in all my life.

Mar. Then we may yet be saved; a letter shall save us.

Emily. But the discovery of my disguise.

Mar. Shall be turned to our advantage.

Emily. What do you intend?

Mar. Briefly this—but here comes the old scoundrel and the young scoundrel with him.

(*Stubborn and Jeremy appear listening*)

Emily. We are observed.

Mar. So much the better: beg my assistance; do you take? be pathetic.

Emily. Save me, Martin! protect, assist me! see me kneeling at your feet.

Fan. Oh, Martin, be not blind—deaf, I mean, to our entreaties. (*they kneel.*)

Mar. Rise: I can resist no longer, go and prepare a disguise; I have promised to assist you, and I will conquer or perish in the attempt. (*softly*) Now, Fanny, come and write a letter which I'll dictate to you.

[*exeunt*

(*Stubborn and Jeremy come forward*)

Jer. Now, sir, I hope you're convinced that Martin, the man who does all your odd jobs, your *tetotum* as you call him, is a rascal.

Stub. Oh, this world! this world!

Jer. (*aside*) Now, if I could but wriggle myself into Martin's place! well, sir, I say nothing; but you may thank Jeremy that you are not made the dupe of one of the most complicated pieces of villany that was ever conceived by the heart of man. (*aside*) There; when preferment is to be gained by eloquence, I believe men become orators by instinct.

Stub. I always thought him honest. How could he impose upon me, who am an acknowledged physiognomist.

Jer. Now I, who am no physmy—hem! I always knew him for a rogue.

Stub. But I'll overthrow their rebellious schemes; I'll confound their politics.

Jer. Ah! you'll find them too much for you. Now let me advise you, sir.

Stub. How dare you talk of advising me? I defy them and all their works. O! here comes the knave; I'll work him for this.

Jer. You know what an artful tongue he has; now, take my advice——

Stub. Damn the fellow, he'll smother me with his advice. Will you close those damned jaws of yours? do you think I'm to be deceived.

enter MARTIN.

Mar. (*aside*) We'll try. O, sir; I've been looking for you high and low.

Stub. Here's a shameless rascal.

Mar. I have been just in time to save you from a plot that——

Stub. Ay; you're a faithful, trusty fellow.

Mar. Now you know I hate to be praised. But listen, sir.

Stub. You ten-fold traitor! you constellation of roguery! leave my house; quit my service.

Mar. Amazement! at the moment when I come to render you a signal service.

Stub. O thou—but I'll hear him out for the joke of the thing.

Mar. First take this ring, sir; I received it of miss Emily as a bribe to deceive you. But tis yours, sir; you are to marry miss Emily; her property ought then to come unimpaired into your hands, and heaven forbid that I should touch one sixpence of it.

Stub. Why this looks like honesty: oh! I knew all along he was honest.

Jer. He's as great a rogue as Alexander the Great.

Stub. But come, Martin; what of the plot?

Mar. First tell me one thing, sir. Is it true you intend to bring the sisters together, and make a double wedding?

Stub. This very hour.

Mar. Fire, water, and the other elements! what a

knack these women have of turning every thing to their own advantage! read this letter, sir, which Flirtilla has contrived to get delivered to Emily.

Stub. You dont say so! how could she manage to do that?

Mar. That's the mystery, sir; well, tis a hard thing to suspect any body, but—(*looking significantly at Jeremy*) how d'ye do, Jeremy?

Jer. What does he mean by that?

Mar. Read the letter, sir; read the letter.

Stub. (*reads*) “My dear Emily, your guardian is desirous that I should marry your lover, captain Courtney; I have feigned consent; but I am determined to marry your guardian, and none but him.”——O the little rogue! “and none but him; for I think he will very soon be knocked off the hooks, and boxed up!” knocked off the hooks and boxed up! ah, there's the secret of her affection for me this morning; come, I like that.

Mar. You see, sir, she's the finished lady of fashion.

Jer. Master, you always said as how you'd be buried under the large mulberry tree, and that I should have the pleasure of burying you.

Stub. What! in compliance with the rage for amateurs, you want to be an amateur undertaker, I suppose.

Mar. Read on, sir; the cream of the joke is to come.

Stub. (*reads*) “As we are to be married at the same time, we'll exchange dresses and counterfeit each other's manners, so that, old Stubborn, being deceived, he'll give you to your old lover, captain Courtney, and marry me himself; yours, Flirtilla.” O the sorceress! so, this is the disguise that blockhead Jeremy told me of.

Jer. My old master is in a bad way, I see.

Mar. Now you see it all, sir, Emily gave me this letter, which she got the lord knows how; by the by, we must pump Jeremy upon that subject.

Stub. True, she might have bribed him.

Jer. So, after all, I'm to be the rogue, and he the honest man.

Stub. How a thick headed fellow may confuse a plain story ! Jeremy overheard your conversation with Emily, and came to me with a blundering hodge-podge tale about treason and plot——

Mar. No, sure ! you surprise me.

Stub. Why, according to Jeremy's account, one would have thought you the greatest knave in existence.

Mar. What, I, sir ? well ; Jeremy may be a very clever cabbage cutter, but he certainly is a bad judge of character.

Jer. Lord have mercy ! what a hypocritical, canting fellow ! he's a perfect Judas.

Mar. Well, Jeremy, I forgive you ; though you have wronged me, you've shown your zeal for our master. Now, don't be angry with him, sir ; what can one expect of a poor, foolish gardener ; a poor dolt, who passes one half of his time in sowing turnips, and the other in digging them up again !

Stub. Well, I forgive him.

Mar. And I forgive him.

Jer. O, I shall go mad ! now take my advice, sir——

Stub. Advice, again ! Martin, knock him down.

Mar. Now, Jeremy, you know I'm a dutiful servant take the hint and go away.

Jer. That fellow has some reason for wanting me to go, so here I'll stick.

Mar. I believe that cursed gardener means to take root here.

Stub. Now, Martin, let's consider how we may defeat those conspirators.

Mar. You have only to prevent their seeing each other, and to put into execution your first immortal project of getting that giddy, wavering Filistilla, married out of hand, to that detestable foot-soldier.

Stub. Ay ; the first thoughts of a great genius are always the best ; it shall be so : I'm as immovable as St. Paul's.

Mar. (*aside*) Then we're safe at last.

Stub. Stop !—I've a better scheme in my head.

Mar. (*aside*) I wish that prolific head of his were under Jeremy's mulberry-tree.— Well, sir?

Stub. My first step shall be to marry Emily myself.

Mar. Dead and buried!

Stub. You admire my scheme, eh?

Mar. Prodigiously. But why?

Stub. It shall be so: I'm safe then at all events: and I expect the attorney here instantly with the papers, ready for signature.—

Mar. A thunderbolt!

Jer. I can tell by Martin's physimy—hang the word, that my master's doing right. I say, Martin, we two honest servants will make a holiday on the occasion.

Stub. Martin, you rogue, keep my secret, and you shall see the biter's bit. You'll relish that: won't it be monstrous fine? ha! ha! but why don't you laugh? see how Jeremy laughs.

Mar. He, he, he! I can't laugh any more; I'm quite exhausted. Oh! curse their hard-hearted mirth!

Stub. Now, come, Martin; come, Jeremy; we'll go in and prepare. I'm so pleased that I could laugh till this time twelve-months. [*exit*

Jer. Come, honest Martin. [*exit*

Mar. I'll break your bones, you potatoe-digging rascal. Ruined, beyond hope! the most amusing thing I can do is to hang myself. But hold! I'm not at my wit's-end yet; and I'll be hanged if I hang myself till I am. I'll make another trial; so tremble master of mine, for the widow shall yet be yours; the captain shall yet marry Emily. I'll marry Fanny. by way of parenthesis, and, as for Jeremy, oh! it's quite shocking to think of the revenge I'll take upon that rascal. [*exit*

SCENE II—the two houses as before.

enter FANNY and MARTIN, from *Stubborn's*.

Mar. Now, Fanny, you see through it at once.

Fan. Yes, clearly; but why?

Mar. We have no time for why's, for here he comes; Jeremy is in our way, and we must destroy Stubborn's

confidence in him. Now, slap my face, but not very hard, and run into the house; and, when I cough, return with Emily.

Fan. There mr. Honesty, take that, and tell tales again. *(she slaps his face, and runs into Stubborn's house as he is coming out)*

Mar. Oh, lord! oh, lord!

enter STUBBORN.

Stub. Why—why—what's the matter here?

Mar. The matter! feel my cheek, sir!

Stub. I dont understand you.

Mar. I dont know how you should. Fanny has just given me such a slap o'the face, that nothing less than a practical illustration could give you an idea of it.

Stub. How dared she do that?

Mar. Because I was honest, and gave you the letter Flirtilla sent to Emily.

Stub. And who told her you did?

Mar. Dont ask me, sir.

Stub. I insist upon knowing.

Mar. When a man has established a reputation for honesty, tis hard to be obliged to overthrow it. No, sir, friendship prevails over duty, and I would not expose Jeremy for the world.

Stub. Jeremy!

Mar. O no, sir; did I say Jeremy?

Stub. O tempora! o mores!

Mar. O Jeremy! however, sir, as you know so much, you may as well know all. Jeremy is over head and ears in love with Fanny; and, with a view to gain her favor, has betrayed us, and exposed our plans.

Stub. A treacherous hypocritical rascal!

Mar. Really, sir, when I reflect upon the deceit and villany that is practised in this world, I am almost tempted to fly to a desert, and end my days among honest lions and unsophisticated tigers: animals that dont profess one thing and mean another, but ingenuously rear, and candidly swallow one alive.

Stub. How unfortunate that they should discover our plans!

Mar. But we're even with them, sir, for I have discovered theirs. Jeremy has undertaken to procure Emily an interview with the captain: upon this spot, and about this time, they are to meet for the purpose.

Stub. We must prevent that, Martin.

Mar. 'Tis done, sir; I've locked the garden-gate upon Jeremy, and here's the key of it.

Stub. You're a treasure, Martin.

Mar. (*aside*) Now for it. (*coughs*) Here they come, expecting to find Jeremy.

Stub. A thought strikes me: instead of Jeremy, they shall find me.

Mar. What an immense head you have got, sir. An old jack-ass!

enter EMILY and FANNY.

Fanny. Now for our faithful Jeremy, madam.

Emily. I hope we shall not be discovered together by my guardian.

Fanny. Or his faithful servant, the lynx-eyed Martin.

Stub. Ladies, your most obedient very humble servant.—

Emily. (*affecting surprise*) O heavens! my guardian!

Fanny. Lord ha' mercy! my master!

Stub. Dont accuse Jeremy of want of gallantry, ladies; this little instrument (*shows the key*) prevents his waiting upon you.

Jer. (*without*) Miss Emily, Fanny, master, Martin, I can't get out.

Mar. D'ye hear him, sir? tis well I locked the gate.

Fanny. Monster! I'll match you for this.

Mar. For shame, Fanny; to seduce Jeremy from his duty.

Emily. Alas! I must submit to my fate.

Fanny. I'd submit indeed, with a plague to it. However, it will be your own fault if you are not a widow before the honey moon is over.

Stub. O you young spirit of rebellion; but come, my wife that is to be, I'll secure you in your chamber till the

contract is ready for your signature; and your accomplished second shall accompany you.

Fanny. One word, sir—I—I—I—oh! I only wish you were my husband.

Stub. Ha, ha, ha! they're at their wit's end; but come my pretty innocents.

[exceunt into Stubborn's

Mar. Now prepare the captain and mrs. Latchet.

[exit into mrs. Latchet's

enter JEREMY—STUBBORN following with a horse-whip.

Jer. Oh, sir, spare me, spare me!

Stub. There, you rascal; now plot against me another time.

Jer. Indeed, sir, I'm as innocent of it all as a sucking pig. I know that cursed Martin——

Stub. Yes, honest Martin has exposed you.

Jer. You'll suffer for this in the end.

Stub. But I know your tricks now. Egad, you're a pretty fellow for a lover, though! Fanny has won your pumpkin of a heart, eh!

Jer. Fanny! oh! I see how it is.

enter MARTIN, from mrs. Latchet's, cautiously.

Mar. (*aside*) Oh, oh! he has caught it, I see. Well, sir, we're safe now.

Stub. Yes, yes; we shall do now, Martin.

Jer. Once more, sir; let me advise you.

Stub. Advise again; I'll horse whip you again, sirrah.

Fanny. (*at Stubborn's window*) Sir, if you think Jeremy deserves another flogging, I'm sure he'll take it with pleasure, for my sake.

Stub. An excuse to look for the captain. Shut that window, hussy.

Jer. (*going*) Well, if he likes to be cheated, he may.

Stub. Stay you here, sir; that fellow wants to be at his plots again.

Jer. It's all over with him. Now take my—hem!

Emily. (*at Stubborn's window*) In pity listen to me,
sir.

Fanny. Pray, sir, consider my poor mistress's situation.

Stub. Pray ladies shut that window, or I'll shoot you.
(*they retire*)

Mrs. Lat. (*at her own window*) Mr. Stubborn, once more I give you warning, that if you dont keep your word with me, I'll post you all over London.

Emily. (*as Flirtilla, at mrs. Latchet's window*) I must see my sister—'pon my honor.

Capt. C. O, let me once more see my poor Emily.

Fanny. (*at Stubborn's, as if calling to Emily*) Madam, quick.—here's the captain.

Stub. Down with that window. (*she retires*)

Mrs. Here comes mr. Snapall, the attorney, sir.

Stub. Then all is safe. Now, good people, prepare, for here comes the executioner. (*they retire*)

enter SNAPALL.

Stub. Welcome, my dear sir : now, now, now for the papers.

Snap. Here they are : but, in your haste this morning you forgot to give me the names of the ladies.

Mrs. (*whispers him*)—Mum ; the ladies themselves will give 'em.

Snap. Shall we go and execute the contracts, sir ?

Stub. For certain reasons, sir, I must remain fixed to this spot, so I'll do my part of the business here. (*aside*) That will effectually prevent Emily's seeing the captain.

Snap. Then here is pen and ink, sir. This is the contract of your marriage with your ward ; this for the marriage of the other lady and the captain.

Stub. I'll first secure my own happiness ; Timothy Stubborn ; (*signs*) there. Now, sir, take this key, go to that room, and there you'll find my dear intended, with her attendant. There, that's the jade.

Fanny. (*at the window—as if speaking to Emily*) O, madam, it is all over with us.

Stub. She may refuse to sign at first, but you must make her do it.

Snap. She's to marry you ; if I can't make her sign to a bad bargain, then I'm no lawyer.

[*exit into Stubborn's*]

Fanny. (*within*) O, madam, I'd rather die than sign.

Mar. O, that terrible woman !

Jer. Before it's too late, now take my advise.

Stub. Get out of my way, or I'll knock you down, rascal.

Snap. (*at Stubborn's window*) The lady refuses to sign, sir.

Stub. If you dont sign that instrument this moment, I'll deprive you of every shilling of your fortune.

Snap. That has had the effect ; tis done, sir.

Stub. Then I'm the happiest man alive : embrace me, Martin, *tol de rol*.

enter SNAPALL from the house.

Snap. Now, sir, for the captain and *his* fair one. You must first sign your consent to their marriage—here.

Stub. (*signs a paper*) With all my soul, there ; you will find *them* at *that* house.

[exit Snapall into wrs. Latchet's]

Fanny. May we come down, sir.

Stub. Ay, instantly ; for I'm impatient to embrace my bride : and here, Jeremy, as I know you like to be busy, take this key, and conduct the ladies hither.

Jer. Well ; but its your concern.

[exit Jeremy]

Stub. Egad, Martin, my boy, if you like the widow, now's your time ; she has got the bit.

Mar. (*aside*) You'll find she's got the bridle. Thank'e, sir ; but Fanny and I are going to make each other happy : besides the widow is on the point of marriage.

Stub. The devil she is ! what, then, she has been doing all this to deceive me ?

Mar. So you'll find, sir : but here she comes, to speak for herself.

enter JEREMY, FANNY and mrs. LATCHET, the contract in her hand, from Stubborn's.

Jer. You had better have taken my advice, sir.

Stub. What do I see ?

Mrs. Lat. Penelope Arabella Latchet, your loving wife.

Stub. What does this mean? am I in my senses? where is Emily?

enter, from Mrs. Latchet's, Capt. COURTNEY and EMILY.

Emily. Here I am, sir: the same Flirtilla you so ungallantly rejected this morning.

Stub. I'll not believe it: I'll swear I conversed with you at that window; with Flirtilla at the other.

Fanny. I'll explain it all, sir. This morning, in miss Emily's apartment, Martin discovered a hole in the wall, opening to Mrs. Latchet's. We have availed ourselves of it in the way you see; and miss Emily has alternately appeared as herself, and as Flirtilla.

Stub. So Jeremy is the honest man, after all.

Mar. Yes, sir; and I the rogue, at your service.

Stub. I shall go mad! what am I to do?

Jer. Why, take my advice, sir.—

Stub. O, damn your advice.

Capt. C. It will add to my present happiness, sir, to know that I possess your friendship.

Mrs. Lat. My dear, we shall be very happy together, upon one condition.—

Stub. Any thing for a quiet life. Name it.

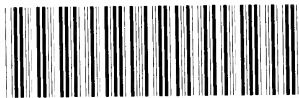
Mrs. Lat. I must have every thing my own way.

Stub. Well, we must all make ourselves as happy as we can; but that source of all evil, that cursed hole in the wall, shall be blocked up.

Fanny. Hold, sir: against that decree I appeal to our friends here; and, I trust, they will allow the *hole in the wall* to continue.



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